

Discussing Some Social Issues Brought Out by the Rigvedic Poets of Mandala-10

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Introduction:

Man is a social animal who prefers to live in a group with other people and shares language, dwelling places, cultural features etc with them. An ancient settled Tribe is a conglomeration of many independent sections or communities like the Warriors, the Farmers, the Traders, the Artisans, and the Herd Keepers etc who try to maintain their identity despite living together. Since ancient time, a Tribe is known by its Prime Leader usually came from the Warrior class who ruled and controlled the area where his people lived.

Rigved is a story the People of a **Priestly Community** who are the originators of their beliefs and practices. As such, the **Priestly Community of Rigved** does not represent the ruling class of that time, but all **Ten Mandalas of Rigved** inform us that the Priests always lived under the shadow of the People of Warrior Class who ruled the various parts of the **Indian Sub-continent**. The important warrior tribes mentioned in **Rigved** with whom since pre-Rigvedic time the Priests shared some cultural features like the Language, Beliefs, the Places of Residence etc are the **Bharatas**, the **Anus**, the **Druhyus**, the **Purus**, the **Turvasas**, and the **Yadus**.

It is generally agreed by many that **Mandala-10** is the **Last Mandala of Rigved** that was composed on both sides of river **Sindhu** as it includes names of the rivers from East and West directions of **Sindhu** which are commonly considered to be the most important **Geographical Feature** found in the Rigvedic texts. The Composers of **Mandala-10** have discussed several points that are not found in any of the **Five Early Mandalas** such as Cosmic origin of World, Origin of Gods, Yama-Yami, Death, Faith, Knowledge, Speech, Funeral, other Social problems e.g. Gambler, Diseases etc.

Every society has to face some social, economic problems over a period of time. The **Poets** of **Mandala-10** too have presented some social issues faced by the families of society of that time, but in a poetic style such as Selection of Life Partner, Marriage Ritual, Problem of Successor of a Childless Couple, Sex Problem in Married life, and Selection of the Heir from Many Contenders.

In the present essay, using “**out of the box thinking approach**” an attempt has been made to decode the content of the verses wherein, the **Poets** have brought out some social issues experienced by the members of society of that period. **Griffith Translation** [1] is the main source of information for preparing this essay.

It is sincerely requested not to treat the issues discussed in the present essay as the erotic stories composed in the ancient time or not to look at them from the vulgarity point of view.

I. Three Interlinked Social Issues highlighted in the Hymn Rv-10.27:

Hymn Rv-10.27 is dedicated to God **Indra** and its Poet has brought out some issues related to the society of that time. Three such points are discussed in the following paragraphs.

a. Case of a Good looking Girl's marriage (verse Rv-10,27,12) :

**Rv-10.27,12: *kiyaṭī yoṣā maryato vadhūyoḥ pariprītā panyasāvāryeṇa |
bhadrā vadhūrbhavati yat supeśāḥ svayaṃ sāmītram vanute jane cit ||***

How many a maid is pleasing to the suitor who fain would marry for her splendid riches?

If the girl be both good and fair of feature, she finds, herself, a friend among the people.

-symbol indicates Griffith Translation

In the verse**12**, the Poet talks about a good looking girl who can see properly, finds her match/ partner among the most eligible ones. As a matter of fact, it makes it clear that, in those days the girls had say in selecting match for them. It means to say that the people or the heads of the family of that time were open minded and would have given consent to a man as a life partner who was girl's choice. Though arrange marriages would have been in place, still love marriages would have been encouraged and performed by the family members as per the tradition of that era, and the people would have celebrated the marriage occasion with great zeal and enthusiasm.

b. A Case of a Blind Girl's marriage:

**Rv-10.27,11: *yasyānakṣā duhitā jātvāsa kastāṃ vidvānabhimanyāte andhām |
kataro meniṃ prati taṃ mucāte ya īṃvahāte ya īṃ vā vareyāt***

When a man's daughter hath been ever eyeless, who, knowing, will be wroth with her for blindness?

Which of the two will loose on him his anger-the man who leads her home or he who woos her?

In this verse, the Poet has presented the real problem of a blind girl's marriage, who cannot see and hence cannot select her companion. But the Poet makes it clear that it is the primary responsibility of her father to tell about her blindness to the prospective bridegroom well in advance, so that a person would be her husband is aware about the same. It means to say that arrange marriage is the only option left with the family members to fix a wedding of a blind girl, her father should not hide anything from the family of the bridegroom so that, in future Groom's family would not feel intentionally cheated by the Bride's family.

c. Some People have interest in Soma drink and not in Yajna Ritual:

The verses **8 to 10** of the hymn **Rv-10.27** tells us altogether different story. The Composer in these verses narrates his experience in some location where the Priests invite the local people for Yajna rite who do not know the purpose of Yajna.

Rv-10.27,8: *ghāvo yavam prayutā aryo akṣan tā apaśyam saḥaghopāścarantīh |*
havā idaryo abhitah samāyan kiyadāsusvapatiśchandayāte ||

The freed kine eat the barley of the pious. I saw them as they wandered with the herdsman.

The calling of the pious rang around them. What portion will these kine afford their owner?

Rv-10.27,9 :*saṃ yad vyaṃ yavasādo janānāmahaṃ yavāda urvajreantah |*
atrā yukto.avasātāramichādatho ayuktaṃ yunajadvavanvān ||

When we who eat the grass of men are gathered I am with barley-eaters in the corn-land.

There shall the captor yoke the yokeless bullock, and he who hath been yoked seek one to loose him.

Rv-10.27,10: *atredu me maṃsase satyamuktaṃ dvipācca yaccatuspātsaṃsrjāni |*
strībhīryo atra vṛṣaṇaṃ pṛtanyādayuddhoasya vi bhajāni vedaḥ ||

There wilt thou hold as true my spoken purpose, to bring together quadrupeds. and bipeds.

I will divide, without a fight, his riches who warreth here, against the Bull, with women.

In the verse the composer gives twist to the situation by quoting an example of the cows who just know to eat or graze (here Yava means Grains/generic term), but do not offer their milk to the owners on their own, unless they are compelled to do so.

Probably, the Poet wants to say that the **Godless People** are very similar in behaviour as that of the cows/animals, who just want to enjoy the Soma drink, but have no interest in worshipping **Indra**, and hence contribute nothing to **Yajna** rite.

The Singer explains this in his words that, the only way to make them to offer something in **Yajna**, are to defeat them in the battle, and only **Indra** means Leader of the Warrior Tribe/King can do the same. Please note that the **Godless People** are not known to the **Priests**, the incident could have happened in an unknown place, and hence their identity is not clear.

It means to say that the unidentified persons (opponents of the Priests), who drink Soma

juice prepared for **Yajna** were not aware of the purpose of **Yajna** ritual (also Indra and his act), came to the site of **Yajna**, to enjoy the **Soma** juice. It implies that, it is the duty of the Priests (similar to father of a blind girl) to tell the people of the new locality about the importance of **Yajna** rite and its purpose. It means, when the Priests visits a new place, then it is their prime duty to spread the awareness about the **Yajna** among the people of that locality.

In sum, through the first twelve verses of the hymn **Rv-10.27**, the Composer has emphasised that, unless and until the awareness about **Yajna** ceremony is propagated properly at the new places, then only the people would come to know about its significance, would accept it in principle, or otherwise, they would oppose it blindly, and simply look at it as a function or an event to enjoy Soma drink/ juice only.

II. Discouragement to Marriages within the Family Members:

Historians report that in **Egypt**, during the ancient period, there was a trend in the Royal Families of that period that Many Princes and Princesses used to marry either within the families means **Brother-Sister** marriage or with the close blood relatives such as **Niece**. Some experts say that some **Pharoas of Egypt** married to their sisters, but on rare occasion a **King** from the Royal Family also wedded to his own **daughter** (Father-Daughter marriage). It is believed that the **Pharaohs** created this tradition because of the old belief that the God **Osiris** married his sister **Isis** to keep their bloodline pure.

The Greek kings (**Ptolemys**) who ruled ancient **Egypt** for about 300 years also followed same practice so that there would not be mix-up of blood with the native people of **Egypt**.

As a Royal Princess was not permitted to marry a person who does not belong to a Royal Family or a Family that has no Equal Status, or a Prince belonging to other country (an Outsider), then there was no option left for her other than marrying her own brother. It is said that due to this **Stringent Status Requirement**, many Royal Princesses either remained unmarried till death or married either their brothers or their fathers.

Now keeping above information in the back of our mind, we shall find out what Rigvedic Poets of Mandala-10 have to say about the **Incestuous Alliances**. There are two such examples mentioned in the **Mandala-10**.

a. A Case of “Yama and Yami” mentioned in the hymn Rv-10.10:

Hymn **Rv-10.10** is a dialogue hymn, as an on-going dialogue that occurs between the twin brother and sister through which the Composers has attempted to address the question of “Marriage within the Family Members” i.e. Brother and Sister physical relationship at that time.

As per the Rigvedic Text **Yama** and **Yami** are the twin children of Vivasvana (God Surya), and hence they happen to be brother (Yama) and sister (Yami). We shall purposely begin our discussion with **verse-7** as it clearly hints at **Yami** giving an open initiation to her brother **Yama** to have sexual relationship with her. The Poet has presented the verses **8 to 14** as the on-going dialogue between brother and sister and every time **Yama** tries to convince her that there is no possibility for any brother to have physical intimacy with his own sister in any form. It means, through this hymn, the Poet does not recommend sexual interaction within the members of the same Family.

Rv-10.10.7: yamasya mā yamyam kāma āghan samāne yonau sahaśeyyāya |

jāyeva patye tanvam riricyām vi cid vrheva rathyeva cakrā ||

I, Yami, am possessed by love of Yama, that I may rest on the same couch beside him.

I as a wife would yield me to my husband. Like car-wheels let us speed to meet each other.

The verse **Rv-10.10,7** informs us about **Yami** looks at her brother **Yama** as her husband. Hence she tells **him** that she loves him, and wants to have physical relationship as a wife has with her husband.

In the **verse-8**, **Yama** gives a reply to **Yami's** proposal, as the spies of Gods are regularly watching both of them, the twins should not discuss the matter at all. He further tells her that it would be better for her to get involved with someone of her liking.

Verse-9 conveys that **Yami** still insists **Yama** to have physical contacts with her and quotes an example as that of **Heaven** and **Earth**, though both are Brother and Sister in relation, but have given birth to many children (Heaven and Earth are considered as the Universal Parents of the Rigvedic Deities – please refer to the verses **Rv-7.53,1** and **2**).

Starting from the verses **10 to 14**, in an every alternate verse, **Yama** counters his sister's point in a proper way, first says that probably in near future, after some generations, the people would not imagine about having such unethical act, as they would decide to follow some norms and find their partners outside their families. **Yama** also says that as he is not at all interested in such relationship, she needs look for a suitable life partner for her.

It means to say that, though **Yami** keeps insisting to have physical intimacy, and her brother **Yama** keeps refusing the same and also argues with his sister that it would really be a sinful activity if he goes by her desire. Hence he categorically states that she must choose a right man as her companion if she wishes to have pleasure like human-beings/mortals.

From the content of the Hymn **Rv-10.10**; it is evident that Brother-Sister sexual relationship is not at all recommended by the Poet of the said hymn.

b. An Example of Romance of God Surya/Sun and Goddess Usha/Dawn:

The two successive verses belonging to hymn **Rv-10.3** dedicated to **Agni** jointly retell the mythical story of God **Surya** having love affair with Goddess **Usha**, which is actually based on a natural phenomenon, as a daily routine God **Surya** follows Goddess **Usha/Dawn**.

Both verses with Griffith Translation are given below.

Rv-10.03,2: *kr̥ṣṇām yadenīmabhi varpasā bhūjjanayan yoṣāmbṛhataḥ pīturjām |*
ūrdhvaṃ bhānuṃ sūryasya stabhāyandivo vasubhiraratirvi bhāti ||

Having overcome the glimmering Black with beauty, and bringing forth the dame the Great Sire's **Daughter**,
Holding aloft the radiant light of **Surya**, as messenger of heaven he shines with treasures.

Rv-10.03,2: *bhadro bhadrayā sacamāna āghāt svasāraṃ jāro abhyetipaścāt |*
supraketairdyubhiragnirvitiṣṭhan ruśadbhirvarṇairabhi rāmamasthāt ||

Attendant on the Blessed Dame the Blessed hath come: the **Lover** followeth his **Sister**.
Agni, far-spreading with conspicuous lustre, hath compassed Night with whitelyshining garments.

After Night, **Surya** gets into action, and comes after **Usha** who is believed to be his Sister. But the Poet has presented the act of Nature as if **Surya** is a lover of **Usha**, and therefore, he daily chases her.

Please note that in the the several verses of the Rigvedic Texts, **Usha** is described as the “**Daughter of Heaven**”, and in a few verses **Surya** is called as **Aditya**, means **Son of Aditi**. But as per other myth, he is also termed as the **Son of Heaven and Earth**. It means to say that, in relation, **Surya** is brother of **Usha**.

Since the references about the story of their love affair are also found in some of the verses of the **Five Early Mandalas**, hence it can be firmly said that the story would have been existing in the minds of ancestors of the Rigvedic Priests since pre-Rigvedic time.

In the verse **Rv-3.44,2**; the Composer points out that **Indra** is aware of love story of **Usha** and **Surya/Sun**. Through the verse **Rv-3.30,12** the Poet informs us **Indra** has specifically told **Surya/Sun** not to exceed the limit.

Additionally, the Poet of the verse **Rv-1.115,2** tells us that both are **in love with each other**, as young man follows a young girl, **Surya** daily keeps chasing **Usha**.

Rv-1.115,2: Like as a **young man** followeth a **maiden**, so doth the **Sun** the **Dawn**, refulgent Goddess:

Where pious men extend their generations, before the Auspicious One for happy fortune.

But when both of them do not listen to the advice given by **Indra** and continue their romance, then being Head of the Family, **Indra** removes wheel of **Surya's** Ratha (**Rv-4.30,4**), and crushes **Usha's** Ratha (**Rv-4.30,9**; **Rv-10.73,6**).

Above story becomes another example of the **strong opposition** of the Rigvedic Priests to a marriage between brother and sister; the two opposite gender persons who belong to same family and are the blood relatives.

In short, the examples of **Yama** and **Yami**, as well as **Surya** and **Usha** definitely convey that, since pre-Rigvedic time, the **incestuous relationship** was not preferred at least in the Vedic Community.

It is quite possible, during that period, in other communities of the Rigvedic Society or in other tribes belonging to different areas surrounding the Rigvedic Territory, the marriages between the Members of the same Family or blood relatives would have been performed due one or other reasons. **Probably in many communities of that period, incestuous union was not a taboo.**

Although closeness of the two opposite genders belonging to same family did not become a social order **or** was unacceptable in general, still in some special cases, out of compulsion wedding between the two members of the same family would have been permitted.

III. Birth of a New God “Brahma Deva Vastoshpati” in an Unusual Manner:

The hymn **Rv-10.61** is addressed to **Visvedevas** wherein the **verses 5 to 8** tell us a mythical story of birth of “**Brahma Deva Vastoshpati**” from mother **Earth**, but indirectly using the semen virile generated during the process of the physical relationship between **Dyaus/Heaven** and

Usha/Dawn. Surprisingly, in these four verses of the said hymn; the Composer has presented a Rigvedic Myth that was unknown earlier, and unlike the “On-going Romance of God Surya/Sun and Usha”, it was never touched upon by any Earlier Poet, and therefore needs special attention.

It should be borne in mind that in the Vedic world, **Usha** is the **only Goddess** who has direct bearing on the life of all living beings of the world. Goddess **Saraswati**, the most celebrated river of Rigvedic document, being a geographical feature has a regional presence, and important for the Priestly Community only. As per the Rigvedic Texts, Goddess **Aditi** is the mother of **Seven Adityas**, but she is nowhere called as the mother of **Usha/Dawn**. Please note that in the several verses of the Early Mandalas of Rigved, Goddess **Usha/Dawn** is called as the **daughter of Heaven**. When the Composer of the hymn **Rv-7.53** specifically says that the **Heaven** and the **Earth** are the **Universal Parents** of all Rigvedic Deities, then based on this information **Prithvi/Earth** needs to be considered as mother of **Usha/Dawn** as well.

Now coming to the description given in the verses **5 to 8** of the hymn **Rv-10.61**; the two verses-**5** and **6** depict that **Father** (Heaven) is making love with his **Daughter** (Usha). During the course of their physical intimacy in mid-heaven, the Father releases his semen/fluid/**Reta**, and a part of it falls on the **Earth**. Then as per the verse **Rv-10.61,7**; it is the **mother Earth** who receives the fallen semen of **Heaven**, gets pregnant with it, and then gives birth to **Brahma Deva Vastoshpati**, and not **Usha**, the daughter of Heaven. This God is purposely created to protect the laws (**vrata**) of the world. **Though the story tells us that there is an incestuous activity between Heaven and Usha**, but **Brahma Deva Vastoshpati** is born from **Earth** who is designated as mother of all gods.

It seems that the Poet is in a hurry to take the credit of creation of a new god. Since there are many gods already existing in the Vedic Philosophy, and to create a new one now as direct union of **Heaven** and **Earth** is not possible, then the Composer decides to invent a new route. As per the old belief, Goddess **Usha** daily moves very close to her Father “**Heaven**”, and taking advantage of this feature, the Poet cooks up a new story of **Heaven** making love with his daughter **Usha/Dawn**. The very purpose of this myth is to get released semen of **Heaven** during their physical intimacy so that when the same is shown to have fallen on mother **Earth**, then it could make the latter pregnant. In this way, the Poet succeeds in bringing semen of **Heaven** on **Earth** for giving birth to a new god (Usha/Dawn has no direct role in birth of a new one) of his liking **Brahma Deva Vastoshpati**.

Probably the people of the Priestly Community had moved to the unidentified area that was already occupied by some unknown tribe who followed their own customs, and did not listen to the

Priests. The social conditions prevailing there would have made the Composer to create a new god to protect the traditions/ rta/laws followed by the Rigvedic Priests and to redefine social order existing there. This might have been **done to get some mental satisfaction only**.

The story of creation of a new god **Brahma Deva Vastoshpati** is nothing but the lofty imagination the Poet of the hymn **Rv-10.61**, but it definitely creates confusion in the minds of the readers.

IV. Performing Marriage of a Girl in absence of her Parents- Hymn Rv-10.85:

Hymn **Rv-10.85** is one of the celebrated hymns of **Rigved**, wherein first time any Rigvedic Composer has paid special attention to a subject like domestic ritual commonly known as “**Vivaha/Marriage**”.

As per the standard definition, a **Hindu Marriage** is a ceremony arranged in advance and performed in a traditional manner in which, in presence of the gathering, the ritual performer (the Priest) declares a bonding of the two opposite sex persons as the life partners. Since ancient time, marriage is always considered as an Important Custom in the human life.

After studying the content of the verses from different perspective, it has been decided to present them in a different way so as to reveal the true purpose of the Poet in composing the same.

Though hymn **Rv-10.85** mainly talks about the marriage of “**सूर्या/ Suryaa**” who is the Daughter of God **Surya/Sun** with **Soma/Moon**, but the last few verses paint the true picture of the story.

Based on the content of the **47** verses of the hymn, some verses have been re-arranged to bring continuity in the flow of information provided by the Composer, that are discussed below.

a. **Introduction of Moon as Soma**: The **first five verses** of the hymn **Rv-10.85** deal with the origin and the natural way of sustenance of the various components of the World including Earth, Heaven, Surya/Sun, Soma/Moon etc as per the laws of **Adityas**. In fact, through theses verses, the Composer has successfully introduced the **Moon**, an element of the world with a new name “**Soma**”.

Note: The **Mandala-8** Poet in the verse **Rv-8.82,8** has compared upward movement of **Soma** juice in a cup with the rise of **Moon** from Waters (Hymn **Rv-8.82** is dedicated to **Indra**).

b. Up-bringing of “Suryaa/सूर्या”, a Girl abandoned by her Parents due to unknown reason:

In many verses of different Mandalas of **Rigved**, “**Suryaa**” is described as the daughter of the **God Sun/Surya**. It is very strange but fact that, out of the total **47** verses of the said hymn, God **Surya/Sun** appears only twice in the complete hymn; first in the verse **Rv-10.85,1** **along with other physical elements of the world known to the Poet**. And in the verse **Rv-10.85,18** **Surya/Sun** has been indirectly mentioned as the one who moves around and watches everything present in the world as that of **Soma/Moon**.

Surprisingly, there is no mention of **mother of “सूर्या/ Suryaa”** in the whole hymn.

Legends inform us that, God **Surya** is married to Goddess **Sanjana/Saranyu** the daughter of **Vishvakarma**. As she could not bear intense heat of the Sun, she leaves his house and goes to her Father’s place.

The Two late Verses **Rv-10.85,40** and **41** [1] provide clues about **Suryaa’s** upbringing from her childhood to marriageable age.

Rv-10.85,40: Soma obtained her first of all; next the Gandharva was her lord.

Agni was thy third husband: now one born of woman is thy fourth.

Here the word **Soma** stands for **juice** and not the Moon. It means to say that, being daughter of **Surya/Sun** since childhood, **in absence of her mother**, she grows up with **drinking Soma** (as her mother was not present to feed her). In case of human being, **Soma** would become **milk of cow**.

Subsequently, **Gandharva/a** teacher trains her in different fields such as dance, music etc.

Finally, being a grownup girl, she learns how to cook using **fire/Agni**. Please note that **Agni** is called as **Griha-pati** in many Hymns of **Rigved**.

Therefore, in true sense, **Soma** (cow’s milk-for daughter of human), **Gandharva**, and **Agni** become **Suryaa’s Care Takers** or the **Guardians** in absence of her parents and not the real husbands/**Pati** as interpreted by many experts. But the fourth one mentioned in the verse would definitely be her **husband**, a dependable character entering her life, but after proper marriage.

Rv-10.85,41: Soma to the Gandharva, and to Agni the Gandharva gave:

And Agni hath bestowed on me riches and sons and this my spouse.

As mentioned in the earlier verse, with the growing age, the girl is brought up by three separate divine characters in a phased manner. In other words, after birth, when mother leaves a new born girl child on her fate, then the task of bringing up **Suryaa** is shared by three different

entities with the responsibilities are transferred from **Soma** to **Gandharva**, then **Gandharva** to **Agni**, and now in presence of **Sacred Fire/Agni**, the girl (**Suryaa**) is being handed over to her husband (**Soma/Moon**) for remaining life.

Probably that is why in **Hindu Marriages**, the main ritual is performed in presence of **Agni/Sacred Fire (Sapta-Padi/Agni-Sakshi** vow). It is expected that after sometime, **Suryaa** would become mother of **Soma's** child, means only married couple is blessed to get offspring.

The names of the Divine Entities and events mentioned symbolically represent the Real Characters and the Real Marriage Ritual.

Note: As per one version of epic **Ramayana**, one day King **Janaka** of **Mithila** finds a few days old girl child while ploughing the fields, who names her as “**Sita**”. She is also described as the daughter of the Earth, goddess **Bhumi**. It means, **Sita** is the adopted daughter of King **Janaka**. Later on “**Sita**” marries “**Rama**”, the son of King **Dasharatha** of **Ayodhya**.

c. “**Suryaa/सूर्या**” selects **Soma/Moon** as her Life Partner:

Some Composers of the Early and the Late Mandalas in many verses have described that **Suryaa** the daughter of **Sun god** often moves in the **Ratha** of **Asvins**. The Poets of the verses Rv-4.43,2; Rv-6.63,5-6; Rv-7.69,4; Rv-5.73,5; Rv-8.22,1; Rv-1.34,5; Rv-1.116,17; Rv-1.117,13; Rv-1.118,5; depict that as if **Asvins**, the twin brothers are in love with **Suryaa** that is why they show so much interest in her, frequently take her in their **Ratha** for a ride. Similarly, the Composer of the verses Rv-6.55,4 and 5; and Rv-6.58,4 has mentioned that **Pushan** also likes her very much.

Even then, when it comes to select her life partner, she chooses **Soma** over others, **why**?

Probable answer is, **Moon/Soma** is an independent but well established character since old time (see verses **1** to **5** of the hymn **Rv-10.85**) who is like her father comes and goes every day. It means, she finds some similar features in **Soma** as that of her father “**Surya/Sun**” (refer to verse **Rv-10.85,18**). That is why she decides to marry **Soma/Moon**.

Note: In **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata** Epics, there is mention of “**Svayam-vara**”, a contest conducted among the many Eligible Princes to select a husband of the Girl's choice.

d. “**Suryaa/सूर्या** goes in a procession and weds **Soma**” (selected Verses from 6 to 36):

In the **verses-6** to **16**, the Poet has given description about the departure of **Suryaa** to the place of marriage in a procession. **Suryaa**, after dressing to the occasion, starts journey with her

female attendant in a specially designed and decorated wooden **Ratha/cart** drawn by the **Bulls** (not **Asvas**) along with several divine characters like **Asvins**, **Pushan** (who happen to be her earlier lovers), but here represent groom's side now, God **Savitar** etc.

The Verse **Rv-1.184,3** from **Mandala-1** (the last but one Mandala) intimates us that **Pushan** and **Asvins** are eager to participate in the **Bridal Procession of "Suryaa/सूर्या"**.

As per the verse **Rv-10.85,13**; God **Savitar** gives instruction or consent to start the ritual. The verse **Rv-10.85,9** depicts that in presence of **Agni**, **Savitar** hands over the bride to **Soma** after she takes her vow. Similarly, through the verse **Rv-10.85,36**; the bridegroom **Soma** in front of **Agni** gives promise to all those present that henceforth **Suryaa would be his responsibility**. In this way, **Kanya-dana** ceremony gets over. The Gods like Varuna, Mitra, Aryamana, Bhaga, Indra etc bless the newly married couple, and give them their best wishes to have children in future as well.

As mentioned earlier, in the verses pertaining to Marriage ritual, God **Surya/Sun** is conspicuously absent, but the Composer has indirectly conveyed that in absence of God **Surya**, God **Savitar** plays the role of her Father. In fact, as per the verse **Rv-10.85,36** at the time of handing over bride to groom, **Savitar** acts as Father of bride (with Bhaga, Aryamana, Puramadhi). It means, in absence of the parents of **Suryaa**, her **Kanya-Dana** is actually performed by **Savitar**.

e. Union of Suryaa and Soma after marriage (selected verses from 27 to 35):

The verse **Rv-10.85,27** indicates that after the marriage, **Pushan** and **Asvins** take **Suryaa** to her husband **Soma's** place to begin her role as a real **Griha-Patni** and to form first physical bonding with her husband "**Soma**" to produce children. She travels a long distance to reach her husband's place to have physical contact with him first time as his **married wife**. After their first physical contact, her garments are collected and shown to a seasoned person (**Brahmin**) who after seeing the stains on her garments declares that **Suryaa** has successfully been mated with her husband, and confirms the validity of their marriage. This hints at before marriage, though **Suryaa** moved with **Asvins**, and **Pushan** for many days, as she maintained her virginity, therefore her past love affairs would do no damage to her married life (blood stains on robes are taken as a proof of her virginity).

Their first physical interaction becomes a step towards making progress in the married life that would culminate into birth of a child. It means to say that, bearing a child of her husband is the prime duty of a wife, and hence the most important aspect of a happy married life.

Note: In a nomadic "**Kanjarbhat**" community who lives in rural **Maharashtra** state of **India**, even today, there exists an age old tradition that, a newly married girl when mates with her husband

first time on wedding night, the senior community members (the caste panchayat) purposely take possession of a bedsheet used at the time of first intercourse to observe the blood stains on it. When stains are seen on a bedsheet, means a married girl is **virgin** or **pure** (virginity test). Otherwise, the marriage can be annulled or broken.

f. Transition of the Story from the Divine Beings to Human Beings (verses 39; 42 to 47):

As discussed earlier, the Poet has described an ancient Marriage ritual using the Divine Characters like **Suryaa** and **Soma**. But the absence of the names of these two divine characters in the verses **39; 42 to 47** of the hymn **Rv-10.85** clearly point out the fact that the story highlighted in the early part of the hymn is directly related to the family life of the Human Beings.

Rv-10.85,39: Agni hath given the bride again with splendour and with ample life.

Long lived be he who is her lord; a **hundred autumns** let him live.

In the verse **Rv-10.85,39** given above, the Poet requests **Agni** to give **hundred autumn** lifespan means a very long life to Bride and Groom. **Sharadah Shatam**/hundred years phrase means an ideal lifespan that is applicable to a human being only. This is due to the fact that since pre-Rigvedic era, the ancestors of the Priests have defined **All Vedic Deities as the Immortal Characters**. Hence the phrase is not applicable to any Rigvedic Deity.

Another verse **Rv-10.85,42** tells us about “what gives completeness to the family life of the human beings”. A Family includes sons, grandsons of an old couple who live happily together.

Rv-10.85,42: Be ye not parted; dwell ye here reach the full time of human life.

With sons and grandsons sport and play, rejoicing in your own abode.

Two verses 46, and 44 intimate about who all are already present in her Husband’s family.

As per the verse **Rv-10.85,46**; when a newly married girl first time goes to her husband’s house to start a new life with partner, then there she finds in his **joint family**, there are many family members living together under one roof such as Father-in-law; Mother-in-law; Brothers-in-law, and Sisters-in-law. It means, unlike her earlier place of living, this new house is full of close relatives, and hence her first priority must be to know each of them, and mentally be ready to live with all of them.

Additionally, as per the verse **Rv-10.85,44** a newly married girl/wife requires to look after cattle, all two footed (men, birds) and four footed domestic animals present in her husband’s house. It means there exists other members who form an extended family.

It means to say that, now as a responsible **house wife/Griha Patni**, she has to consider each one of them as a part of her own Family (her own people) and treat them with respect and affection whether the humans or the animals.

In other words, now the **Griha Patni/married woman** needs to pay attention not only to her husband, but also to all other members who are already there in her husband's house.

Summing up the discussion on above mentioned topic, a girl who is deserted by her own parents after her birth is brought up by some responsible members of the community; has her own friend circle and some of them pretend to be in love with her, but she selects her life partner who is an independent and well settled person. After marriage, she goes to her husband's place to find other blood relatives of her husband, and many animals as the part of a joint family to whom she has not come across before marriage. Hence as a newcomer in the well established family, she has to mould herself in a new environment in a very short time, and needs to show confidence in shouldering the double responsibilities, first as a wife, and second as a responsible member of the joint family.

V. Achieving the “Successor” for Kingdom through “Secret Mission”- Hymn Rv-10.86:

The hymn **Rv-10.86** is considered as a Dialogue Hymn, and many experts say that it is one of the strangest hymns of the Rigvedic Texts.

The Poet of the hymn **Rv-10.86** that includes **23 verses** has indirectly highlighted a special case a Family Problem which is not found anywhere in the documents. The King of some unknown kingdom who lived during that period who happens to be “**Childless**” despite having married for several years. The Poem is composed in such a way that as if God **Indra**, his wife **Indrani** are the affected party, and hence both jointly decide to solve their **Family Issue** in the best possible way. It is very interesting to know more about their plan and how the Divine but the **First Couple of Rigved** finds a realistic solution to their Problem.

The hymn mostly revolves around three main characters and they are;

- 1. Indra:** The **Supreme God** and the undisputed **King** of all Rigvedic Deities.
- 2. Indrani:** The wife of **Indra** and hence automatically becomes the **Queen** of the Vedic World.
- 3. Vrisha-Kapi : Man-Ape.** Some identify him as the epithet of **Sun** or **Fire** [2]. Some Scholars say that he may be treated as the epithet of God **Vishnu** as in **Dashavatara** of story, we find his **Fourth** out of the **Ten Avataras** as “**Nri-Sinha/ Nara-Simha**” (half man and half Lion/animal).

To decipher the hymn **Rv-10.86** in a proper manner, it is essential to treat the said hymn as a **Rigvedic Riddle**. Then there is a need to take a **penetrative look** at the content of the hymn to get the complete picture in our mind so that we can easily come out of the **trap** laid by the **Composer**. Moreover, to resolve the issue, we need to assume that the three important above mentioned characters are the names of **three real persons** as given below;

1. **Indra**-- as the **King** of undefined kingdom or the Tribe Leader.
2. **Indrani** – as the **wife** of the **Tribe Leader** or the **Queen** of the kingdom.
3. **Vrisha-Kapi** --- a **Close Confidant** of the **King**

After viewing the content of the hymn in entirety, and specifically to decode the **Message Hidden in all 23 verses**, and to arrive at the answer closer to reality, a special approach has been used. First the important verses are identified, purposely arranged into separate parts, and then discussed in detail so as to bring continuity in the flow of information provided by the Composer. The same has been explained in the following paragraphs.

a. The Real Problem of the “Absence of Successor” of the King after his Death

From the content of the several verses, it can be easily inferred that the King and his wife do not have child of their own, and therefore the king is worried about the future of his kingdom due to absence of his “**Successor**” after his death.

The reason for their “**childless**” married life has been given in the verse **Rv-10.86,16**.

The Poet has composed the verse **Rv-10.86,16** in such a manner that the **King** (Indra) is having face to face dialogue with his **Wife** (Indrani) and explaining her the root cause of not having any issue despite married for many years.

Rv-10.86,16: न सेशे यस्य रम्बते.अन्तरा सक्थ्या कप्त्र |
सेदीशेयस्य रोमशं निषेदुषो विज्म्भते विश्वस्मादिन्द्रौत्तरः ||
na seśe yasya rambate.antarā sakthyā kapṛt |
sedīśeyasya romaśaṃ niṣeduṣo vijṛmbhate viśvasmādindrāuttaraḥ ||

Interpretation: The King tells the Queen that “He can not be termed as the Head of the Family since his sexual organ located between the thighs fails to make entry into her private part”.

It means to say that at the time of intercourse between the **King** and **Queen**, there exists “Lack of Erection” or “the **King** is unable to maintain an Erection”, a sexual problem of the King's male organ, and hence the **Queen** is unable to conceive.

In other words, as the King has failed to prove his “Manhood”, but frankly accepts his shortcoming and does not mind in indirectly calling himself as the “Impotent Husband”.

In the context of present-day medical science, it can be described as the “Erectile Dysfunction”.

In the next verse i.e. **Rv-10.86,17** ; the Poet has presented reply given by the **Queen** on the comments made by the **King** about their married life.

Rv-10.86,17: न सेशे यस्य रोमशं निषेदुषो विज्म्भते |

सेदीशेयस्य रम्बते.अन्तरा सक्थ्या कप्रद विश्वस्मादिन्द्रौत्तरः ||

na seśe yasya romaśaṃ niṣeduṣo vijṛmbhate |

sedīśeyasya rambate.antarā sakthyā kapṛd viśvasmādindrāuttaraḥ ||

Interpretation: The **Queen** replies to the **King** “even though he is not the 'Master of the Bed', still she finds him as her soul mate”.

It means to say that despite failing to meet the expectation as the Husband, the Queen still loves the King as he is.

It seems that the King is a dejected person who lost interest in daily routine, and desperately wants to have his “**Successor**” from his wife, and does not want to adopt anyone as a Heir.

Once the **King** opens the subject of Heir with the **Queen** and gives brief idea about the practical solution to the problem. He also requests her to mentally prepare herself for the necessary co-operation.

In the very first verse, the Composer has pointed out that the people of kingdom have already started disrespecting the King possibly due to his failure to produce an offspring. The verse **Rv-10.86,1** has been composed by the Poet in such a way that as if the People have stopped worshipping and offering **Soma** to God **Indra**.

b. Entry of a new character “Vrisha-Kapi”; who is He?

In the first verse of the hymn **Rv-10.86** the Poet has introduced “**Vrisha-Kapi**” a character not found anywhere else except in this hymn, who is also denoted as the close friend of **King** (Indra) in the verse **Rv-10.86,4**.

Verse **Rv-10. 86,13** describes “**Vrisha-Kapi**” a man who comes from a good family, has wife named as “**Vrisha-Kapay**”. The Composer in the said verse also narrates that “**Vrisha-Kapi**”

has many grown up sons and daughters-in-law as well. It means, unlike the King, **“Vrishha-Kapi”** is a happily married, matured, and the proven **“Family Man”**; a person who can be trusted by the King for the special work. Probably both friends are the middle aged persons.

Through the verse **Rv-10.86,20**; the Composer informs us that **“Vrishha-Kapi”** does not live in the same town, but has come to the place of the King upon the latter's invitation. This topic would be discussed in detail later on.

Upon arrival, **“Vrishha-Kapi”** meets the King and asks him about the purpose of invitation to his Kingdom. Being a friend, the King first takes **“Vrishha-Kapi”** into confidence, explains him the complete background behind the urgent call, then asks his help in getting the **“Successor for the Kingdom”**. The King tells his friend as a part of a **“Secret Mission”** he needs to become a **“Sexual Partner”** of the Queen so that she would become Pregnant, which would finally culminate into **“Birth of a Child”**.

After thinking for a while **“Vrishha-Kapi”** accepts the proposal put up by his friend, and assures the **King** he would never disclose or discuss the subject with anybody.

Please note that the **King** has intentionally selected a **“Seasoned Man”** and not a young one for the said task so that it would always remain a **“Closely Guarded Family Secret”**.

c. The Queen boasts about her own capability

When the **King** tells the **Queen** to get ready for the sexual interaction with the guest **“Vrishha-Kapi”** in near future, then the **Queen** starts bragging about herself, tells the King through the composed verse **Rv-10.86,6** that no woman would match her performance during the physical intimacy with anyone. It means, the Poet indirectly conveys that though she is in her middle age, still she is sexually very active, excited, and ready to give her best when the situation arises.

d. Narration of the “Queen” about her first Physical Contact with “Vrishha-Kapi”

From the above, one thing is clear that **“Vrishha-Kapi”** is the special guest of the **King** who has been specifically invited to solve the **Problem of Heir** of the Kingdom as over the years the latter has been proved to be incapable to sexually interact with his wife to produce children.

The verse **Rv-10.86,3** presents a conversation between the King and the Queen as if the **King** asks some questions to the **Queen** after her very first meeting with **Vrishha-Kapi**, as he finds

her in a bad mood. “Why are you so upset?” “What has the stranger **“Vrishha-Kapi”** done to you in the very first interaction? “

Through the verse **Rv-10.86,5** the **Queen** replies to the **King** that during the course of physical intimacy, in their first direct contact, **“Vrishha-Kapi”** behaved very rudely with her and damaged her lovely and delicate body parts (private parts). Having experienced a very rough treatment from **“Vrishha-Kapi”**, she angrily orders to cut off his head immediately as she does not want to see him near her. It means that the **Queen** does not like **“Vrishha-Kapi”** anymore.

e. Vrishha-Kapi gives explanation about his behaviour to the King and the Queen

When **“Vrishha-Kapi”** comes to know about the complaint of the **Queen** to his dear friend the **King**, then he decides to tackle the situation in a tactful manner. As per the verse **Rv-10.86,7**; he first expresses regret on his behaviour as he was very much tensed and excited as it was his first experience outside his married life, that too having a physically interaction with wife of a close friend. He also says due to anxiety and fear, at that time, his whole body was trembling. Then he addresses the Queen respectfully, calls her as **Amba/Mother** (being **Queen** of the Tribe, she automatically becomes Mother of everyone), to whom he felt was easily accessible, and therefore made the advances which she did not oppose at that time. But **“Vrishha-Kapi”** promises her to handle with care, and would not to hurt anymore during the future intercourse.

Through the verse **Rv-10.86,9**; the **Queen** gives reply to the question asked by the **King** as this harmful creature (**Vrishha-Kapi**) looks at her as if there is no one to protect her. She says that he must keep in mind that she is the wife of Hero (King/Indra) and has full support of Maruts.

In other words, during their first physical act of intimacy, **Vrishha-Kapi** went for showing his **“Hero Instinct”** and the **Queen** felt the same as an **“Animal Instinct”**

f. The King attempts to pacify the Queen

In the verse **Rv-10.86,8** the Poet brings the **King** (Indra) in picture, who also joins the conversation and begins to admire body parts of his wife. The Kings tells the Queen that she has beautiful hands. lovely fingers, long hair, and broad base/hip. To boost her morale, he further says that she is the Wife of Hero, then asks a question to her; “Are you still angry with **“Vrishha-Kapi”**?

But based on her first night experience, the **Queen** firmly tells the **King** that henceforth she

does not want to have physical relationship with **Vrishha-Kapi**.

Then the King requests to take her own time to reconsider her decision.

g. The Queen Changes her Mind for the sake of “Child”

After thinking seriously about the real Problem of Heir, in the interest of the kingdom, the Queen decides to change her opinion about **Vrishha-Kapi** and tells her Husband that now she is willing to forgive **Vrishha-Kapi** for his earlier act, and ready to move forward in their relationship.

In the verse **Rv-10.86,10** the **Queen** (Indrani) speaks up her mind as till date, like other women of the society, on most of the occasions she always lived under the shadow her spouse/man, and jointly performed Yajnas or participated in various rituals or social functions.. In the society, she is known as the **Wife of a Hero** (King/Indra), means she has to play secondary role only. But now onwards, she wants to get identified, as the Mother of the “**Hero Sons**”, which would make her a “**Complete Woman**”. In other words, as the **Queen** wants to have children, hence sends a green signal to the **King** and **Vrishha-Kapi** that she is interested in the relationship.

After listening to the positive comments from the **Queen**, through the verse **Rv-10.86,11** the **King** remarks that among all the women of the world, so far, he used to consider the **Queen** as the most lucky one. But now it is she who has made him to feel proud and to say that **her husband** means the **King** would never die due to old age. Strictly speaking, the second line of the verse makes it crystal clear that as the **Queen** shows her willingness to mate with **Vrishha-Kapi** to get the first child, means now the King is confident that he would definitely get the “**Successor**” to his throne, and his lineage would continue as his Heir would carry forward his name in near future (otherwise the lineage would have ended with the King).

Note: Since in **Rigved**, God **Indra** is described as the immortal character, then there is no question of his death. Hence only possibility is that the term **Indra** in the hymn stands for a **King**.

In the verse **Rv-10.86,12**; the **King** tells the **Queen** that she has taken a right decision and made both **he** and his friend **Vrishha-Kapi** very happy. The offering of her body or sacrifice made by her for the physical intimacy with **Vrishha-Kapi** is **as pure as water** and is done in the name of God (means her act of mating with **Vrishha-Kapi** is the wish of God).

The verse **Rv-10.86,4** is purposely placed here. The verse intimates us that now the **Queen**

worries about the secrecy of their relationship, and the security of **Vrishha-Kapi** as well. Therefore, she tells the **King** that as he always holds **Vrishha-Kapi** very close to his heart, then it becomes his primary duty to protect the latter's identity. Otherwise if the People come to know about their game, then they would go after **Vrishha-Kapi** as a dog attacks a wild Boar (as it aggressively catches ear of a boar).

h. The King starts paying attention to his Health

After finding amicable solution to the dispute, the King becomes overjoyed, and decides to improve his physical health too. In the verses **Rv-10.86,14** and **15**; the Poet describes that the **King** starts eating non-vegetarian dishes specially cooked for him (as Indra likes flesh of Bulls/Oxen) probably to regain the lost potency or the adulthood. He also expects that **Vrishha-Kapi** (the sharp horned bull) would make everyone happy in near future. As the King and the Queen would get a child as “Successor”, there will be a win-win situation for all three of them as well as for his tribe.

i. Vrisha-Kapi takes the Queen on the Top of the World

After having a few more sexual interactions with **Vrishha-Kapi**, the **Queen** decides to share her experience about the former with her Husband. Through the verse **Rv-10.86,18** she gladly tells the **King** that his friend **Vrishha-Kapi** is a changed companion now; has found a killed animal, a knife, a pan, a wagon full of firewood. The content of the verse indirectly points out the fact that **Vrishha-Kapi has learned how to cook his own dishes or mastered the “tricks of the trade”**. It means that now he is a very experienced person who uses different tools and techniques to please a woman in bed. He slowly and steadily makes her to go wild first, and then skilfully sets her full body on fire. In true sense, over a period of time, **Vrishha-Kapi** has become “Master of the Game”.

Please note that in verse **Rv-10.86,5** the Queen calls **Vrishha-Kapi** as a very bad actor, however, in the present verse **Rv-10.86,18**, she indirectly terms him as the best partner in the bed.

The Poet has marked the verse **Rv-10.86,19** as **Vrishha-Kapi's** reply to the comments made by the **Queen** in the earlier verse. **Vrishha-Kapi** claims that based on his experience, now from the behavioural point of view, he can easily distinguish between **Dasa** (Hyena: a wild dog-like animal who goes after flesh and bone) and **Arya** (learned or wise person who uses his brain). Though he enjoys **Soma** drink offered to him, but does not lose his wisdom. It means, despite having **Soma** juice in a large quantity, when goes for mating with the Queen, he remains in his senses, does not

behave like a hungry wild animal (**Dasa**), but pays full attention to the needs like a wise person – Arya (the Queen).

In other words, now **Vrishha-Kapi** first reads mind of the **Queen**, gauges her mood, then takes appropriate steps to make her feel comfortable to enjoy his company in bed.

In short, his innovative acts have made the **Queen** to realise that she is still a young woman who is always eager to go on fire in a company of **Vrishha-Kapi**.

The first two verses **Rv-10.86,1** and **2** exhibit that on the occasion of some ritual (probably Yajna), **Vrishha-Kapi** enjoys **Soma juice** with the members of the Tribe, where he gets treatment as a special guest. At the same time, the King feels that he is purposely being neglected by his own people, which the Poet has presented in the words as the “People have already stopped recognising Indra” means the King. The Queen tells the King as he has no other place to have **Soma juice**; he has to bear with **Vrishha-Kapi**.

j. The King requests Vrisha-Kapi to relocate near the Palace

Through the verse **Rv-10.86,20**; the **King** suggests his friend **Vrishha-Kapi** who lives away from the place of residence of the former to come and stay in the same town near his palace. As per the information available in the verse, **Vrishha-Kapi** belongs to nearby hilly region (desert and sloppy region) which does not have water throughout the year for cultivation, goes to his home place during the rainy season most likely for cultivation of crop. Once gone, then he would not visit the place of the **King** till the crop is cut. It indirectly tells us that **Vrishha-Kapi** is basically a **Farmer**. Therefore, the **King** requests him to relocate near the place of his residence **so that** he would not have to perform a long journey from his permanent residence to the King's place often.

The King in the **Rv-10.86,21** requests **Vrishha-Kapi** to come again to his place from **upward region** (hilly area located nearby), he would make all arrangements for the latter's safe travel. At present, **Vrishha-Kapi** has to travel a long distance that **disturbs his sleep**.

Keeping in a view safety of **Vrishha-Kapi**, as a part of a **Secret Mission**, the **King** might have appointed him as a **Night watchman** who would join the duty in night. It means to say that, **Vrishha-Kapi** might be arriving in the town after evening, available in the palace for the designated activity during the midnight and leaving the King's place early morning to safeguard his identity. This would be **disturbing his sleep**.

This verse makes it apparent that how desperately the King wants to have his “Successor” from the Queen.

k. Vrisha-Kapi goes Home leaving Memories Behind for the King and the Queen to cherish

After successful completion of the assigned task, one day, **Vrisha-Kapi** decides to go back to his native place permanently. Through the verse **Rv-10.86,22** the Poet conveys that the **King** and the **Queen** fondly remember the time spent with **Vrisha-Kapi**. Specifically the **King** recalls acts of his friend **Vrisha-Kapi** who like God **Indra**, using his Special Power fulfilled the need of the Royal Family. Both miss his company, as now there is no one in the house to make noise or behave like wild animal/**Mriga**. The King and the Queen expect that on someday **Vrisha-Kapi** would come back to their place once again and the happy days would return in the palace.

l. The Special Verse “Rv-10.86,23” lifts the curtain over the “Suspense”

Rv-10.86,23 is a very special verse that gives real twist to the game of the Poet played in the name of the trio “**Indra, Indrani** and **Vrisha-Kapi**”. Many say that the hymn is an “**Odd thing out**”. The original Sanskrit verse (both in Deva- Nagari and English alphabets) along with Griffith Translation (#) are placed under for comparison.

Rv-10.86,23: पशुर्ह नाम मानवि साकं ससूव विंश तिम |

भद्रम्भल तयस्या अभूद यस्या उदरममयद विश्वस्मादिन्द्रौत्तरः ||

parśurha nāma mānavi sākaṃ sasūva viṃśa tim |

bhadrāmbhala tyasyā abhūd yasyā udaramamayad viśvasmādiन्द्राउत्तराः ||

Daughter of Manu, **Parasu** bare a score of children at a birth.

Her portion verily was bliss although her burthen caused her grief.

The most striking observation here is, there is no mention of any of the three main characters frequently used by the Composer in the earlier 22 verses.

The Poet in the said verse makes it clear that **Parasu** the Daughter of Man/**Manavi**/human delivers many babies (here the term **Vinsha/twenty/20** means “many”).

Above thing raises doubt about the original intention of the Poet, that also gives rise a serious question, and that is:

“When in the earlier verses of the hymn, the Composer specifically talks about “**Indrani mates with Vrisha-Kapi**”; then how come **Parasu** the daughter of man/ **Manavi** gets pregnant and

gives birth to many children? “

It means to say that the Poet has used the names of three characters “**Indra, Indrani** and **Vrishha-Kapi**” just to hide the identity of the unnamed King of Arya tribe who lived during the Rigvedic Period. It is quite possible that the “**Story of getting a Successor of the King through a Secret Operation**” may be a genuine one, but the Poet wanted to conceal the information and confuse the people on the subject.

Other possibility is that after taking proper diet and treatment, the King would have regained his potency and become capable to produce many children from his wife (hence figure 20/vinsha appears in the verse).

It is to be noted here that in the first 22 verses, the Poet has used “**Mythical Figures**” like **Indra** and **Indrani** to explain the background situation, but in the last verse by giving “**Human Touch**”, he has practically solved the Riddle.

Moral of the story is ; “**A friend in need is a friend indeed**”.

Special Note: Before framing any opinion about the interpretation of the Hymn **Rv-10.86** given above, the reader is requested to go through the other translations of the said hymn made by the several scholars earlier, but do not forget to use **Simple Logic**, and **Common Sense** wherever applicable, while understanding the same.

Special Reference from the Epic “Maha-Bharata”

Epic Mahabharata tells us that, in the **Kuru** clan, there was a King **Shantanu** who ruled from his capital **Hastinapur**, first married to “**Ganga**” (river) who gave birth to a son named as **Deva-vrata**. After disappearance of **Ganga**, once **Shantanu** saw a fisherman’s daughter **Satyavati** on the bank of a river, fell in love at first sight, then went to meet her with a marriage proposal. But prior to marriage itself, the woman put the condition that only her children would have full right to sit on the throne of Hastinapur, and not his Son from the earlier marriage. Therefore, **Deva-vrata** for the sake of his father’s wish, took the oath that he would remain bachelor throughout his life/ would never marry to any woman. In Mahabharata epic, **Deva-vrata** is respectfully known as **Bhishma (one who has taken a terrible vow)**.

After marriage to king **Shantanu**, **Satyavati** gave birth to two sons called as **Chitrangada** and **Vichitra-virya**. After Shantanu, his second son **Vichitra-virya** became the king of **Hastinapur**,

as the elder son **Chitrangada**, while fighting a war with **Gandharva**, unfortunately, lost his life. **Vichitra-virya** ruled from Hastinapur for a few years, became ill that led to his untimely death. Like his elder brother **Chitrangada**, he too died childless, despite marrying to two sisters **Ambika**, and **Ambalika**. Then his mother **Satya-vati** took the help of Sage **Vyasa** who happened to be her son from Rishi Parashara, to impregnate both sisters independently to bear one child each through **Niyoga/नियोग relationship**.

In **Niyoga relationship**, a woman (whose husband is either incapable of fatherhood or has died without having a child) is requested/permited to take the help of a selected man to bear her child. As per **Niyoga** tradition, the man who is selected for task must be a revered person.

From the available information in the text, **Vrishakapi** mentioned in the Rigvedic hymn **Rv-10.86** is not a revered person, but a **farmer**. Still based the purpose of his role in getting the “**Successor**” for the kingdom, the procedure followed at the time of **Rigved** in some form is similar to **Niyoga** principle.

VI. Getting Back “Married Life” on the Right Track- Hymn Rv-10.102:

The Poet has composed the **Rv-10.102** in such a way that, it definitely arouses curiosity in the mind of every serious reader as everyone is interested to know what is the real motive behind the composition of the said hymn.

The hymn revolves around the two characters /persons who are married but have no love or sexual relationship with each other.

Mudgala is a name of married man, who is not at all interested in having physical contact with his wife **Mudgalani**.

Probable reasons for the unhappy married life of any couple are as under.

1. The wide age difference between the two: when a **Man** is more than the double the age of **wife**, hence may not be sexually very active.
2. Despite having intercourses several times, wife does not conceive.
3. **Husband** is sick for some time, and has become physically weak.
4. **Man** might be having many children from his earlier marriages.

5. When woman is not attractive, and if the marriage has occurred due to compulsion (arranged by some family members against the wishes of a Man), then lack of emotional connection with her can make **Husband** to keep away from her.

One thing is clear that **Mudgala--Mudgalani** would have been an **odd pair** that has been hinted at the very first verse as the Composer has used “**mithūkr ta**” word with some purpose.

Rv-10.102,1: *pra te ratham mithūkr tamindro.avatu dhr̥ṣṇuyā |*
asminnājau puruhūta śravāyye dhanabhakṣeṣu no.ava ||

Other possibility is **Mudgala** might be a widower, got married lately to **Mudgalani** mainly to look after his household work.

Now coming to the main point that the Poet wants to drive through the hymn is, the story of husband and wife going together on a long journey in a Ratha driven by a bull. Please note that the Composer does not talk about use of **Asva** for pulling the vehicle of the couple.

General Outline of the story as it appears in the hymn is given in brief below.

Mudgala is a person who has lost interest in his wife **Mudgalani** since many years either she could not produce offspring or she is very much younger to him. Then **Mudgalani** (on somebody's advice?) decides to take **Mudgala** on a very long trip in a **Ratha** drawn by a **bull** (Vrishabha). The Poet in the hymn actually talks about a cart race, means as if the couple is participating in a competition, but from the content of the hymn, it can be easily understood that they are actually going to compete with each other.

The reins of the cart are in the hands of **Mudgalani**, means she is in the driver's seat. During the race, **Mudgalani** tries to attract the attention of her husband by wearing a garment that goes in air while riding Ratha. It means that, at that time she is very excited and has already made up her mind to go to any extent for their physical contact.

The story intimates us that although **Mudgala** is disinterested in **Mudgalani**, but the race factor gives the latter a chance to take initiative to come closer to develop intimacy with her husband.

While the cart is moving with some speed means race is in progress, wherein **Mudgalani** is in the driver's seat, **Mudgala** regains his potency or sexual power (see **verse-8**) looking at the “Many Milching Cows” literally means the mothers or married women who have children.

In sum, the Poet has presented a story in the form of a “cart running in a race that is occupied by the two/ **Mudgala** and **Mudgalani**” which means that both husband and wife are first brought on the same platform/place to get **privacy**, after sometime they further move closer to each other, and finally at some point of time they get turned on to go for copulation.

But the **penetrative look** at the verses of the said hymn provides some clues in the form of symbolism used by the Poet in the composition as he has used some words with different but hidden intention. Probable interpretations of some terms (translated) are given below.

- **Bull/Vrishabha – Mudgala** (as he lacks “**Sex Drive**” possibly due to his old age).
- **Yukta/Yoke-- physical union or locking of a couple with each other.**
- **Race/Ja – Sexual act or intercourse** (journey) privately performed by a married couple.
- **Ratha-** A body of Husband/Mudgala (or wife/Mudgalani at some places).
- **Keshi-** a woman having very long hair (a young lady/ **Mudgalani**)

The Composer has used the mythical terms like of **Indra**, and **Vajra** in the verse **Rv- 10.102,3**; just to introduce factors like “**Power**” and “**Fear**” (a weapon) to keep away all those persons who used to interfere in the family matters or create rift or make fun of **Mudgala** and **Mudgalani** relationship. Then **Indra** drives the people away to provide needed privacy to couple.

Actually, the reference of their first unsuccessful coitus of Mudgala and Mudgalani is found in the two verses **Rv- 10.102,4**; and **5**; wherein through the verse **Rv- 10.102,4** the Poet first informs us that the **Bull (Mudgala)** is now mentally ready to meet his counterpart (**Mudgalani**) after having sufficient quantity of water/after taking rest for many days. The Poet further describes that **Mudgala** pulls his wife towards him using his both hands (**Bahu**), as he is very much eager to win the **race**. The verse **Rv- 10.102,5** secretly informs us that the process of intercourse gets over soon as in the **middle of the race** (or during the early part itself?) , the **Bull (Mudgala)** showers his fluid (**ameyahan**) prematurely. Though this act gives happiness to **Mudgala** (hinted as the Bull wins many cows), but that leaves **Mudgalani** in an unsatisfactory state. This incidence would have occurred sometime before.

Situation changes subsequently, as the Poet in the verse **Rv-10.102,2** categorically states that **Mudgalani** has occupied **driver’s seat/Rathire**, means now she is in a very aggressive mood, and purposely decided to call the shots as she did not enjoy earlier interaction. Since she holds the

position of authority, means it is she who compels **Mudgala** to mate with her as per her terms. She first makes advances by revealing her body parts (in the verse **Rv-10.102,2** the Composer has mentioned as at that time she deliberately wears a garment that goes in air), a move that was pre-planned by her.

In other words, now **Mudgala** has to do what his wife **Mudgalani** asks him to do.

Based on the content of the verses **Rv-10.102,2**; and **6 to 9**, **Central Theme** of the hymn may be taken as, “a long hair young **Woman (Keshi)** rides on a **Ratha** (Body of her Husband), then uses a **whip** (word power or shouts loudly) to make the **Bull** (Mudgala) to run in a **Race** (sexual act) mainly to derive pleasure from act”.

If we go by the available description in these verses, then it becomes apparent that at the time of fresh sexual activity, **Mudgalani** is "riding" her man **Mudgala**. The verse **Rv-10.102,6** provides better wordy picture about their intimacy. In a poetic way, the Composer conveys that “**Bull** (Mudgala) is ready to engage in an act (sexual), **Keshi** (Mudgalani) the driver of **Ratha** is shouting, the **Bull** moves **Ratha** (his body) in a proper position (like a bull gets ready to run in a race), holding **Mudgalani** firmly with his lifted legs pressed close on her body from behind so as to inject milk like liquid in her (**dudheryuktasya dravataḥ**)”.

The verse **Rv-10.102,7** talks about continuity in on-going action, further tells us that **Mudgala** has become a wise person, and learned how to “yoke a bull to Ratha” (means he has successfully entered her) and started moving his body with great speed (as a bull runs hard in a long distance race).

The **verse-8** clears the picture that was hazy before, “after securing her body firmly, paying attention to her breasts (symbolical use of word **गाः/Gaah/cows** for the breasts of a mature woman), while constantly performing manly act, the **Bull /Mudgala** regains his **strength** and **vigour** or “sexual power”.

A close look at the **verse-9** makes it further evident that **Mudgala** is lying on a hard surface of the race-ground/**Kashtha**, but is in a happy state as he has become victor after meeting the expectations of his wife in the **long duration race** (intercourse).

The verse **Rv-10.102,10**; informs us that at the time of next round, husband and wife exchange their positions. It means **Mudgala** has now placed himself on top; hence he is able to control and direct the movements of his body properly. **Without taking water or grass**, means without going for **meal break** (lunch/dinner) both vigorously pursue their copulation activity.

The **verse-11** depicts that **Mudgalani** who was earlier being totally neglected by her husband, has first brought him under control, means she has forcefully made **him** to play his natural role of a **Married Man** in their life. In other words, by taking initiative, **Mudgalani** has become successful in making **Mudgala** sexually active (lack of desire for sex had affected their relationship) and now she is so confident that by playing the lead role in the family life, she would be able to fulfil all her desires in future.

The Poet has used character **Indra** as an arranger, or facilitator who brings both **Mudgala** and **Mudgalani** at one place. In reality, **Indra** acts as is a catalyst only, and then provides an appropriate opportunity to come together, work together, stay together to regain the confidence in married life. It means to say that **Indra** makes them to meet first and then mate.

The most striking observation on the content of the hymn is, the Composer of ancient time, in a poetic style talks about a sex problem like “premature ejaculation” (described in the verse **Rv-10.102,5** as in the middle of the race, the bull sprays water/rain), and two sexual positions; 1. “Man on Top (conventional)”, and 2.”Woman on Top (as a special case refected as driver of Ratha)”.

Moral of the hymn is, “**If a married woman is a determined person, then she can easily make her husband to dance to her tune**”.

Notes : 1. “Sex Drive” of a person depends on age, relationship issues, physical and mental health.

2. The readers should read the translations made by other Rigvedic Experts as well.

VI. Selection of the Best Leader from many contenders- Verse Rv-10.124,8:

Through the **Eighth verse** of the hymn **Rv-10.124**, the Singer explains that the Old Gods (Agni, Varuna) have finally accepted the superiority and vigour of Indra and chosen him as their Leader, very similar to the people from a royal family elect their new ruler/king (based on presence of very special characteristics in the individual), and now moved away from the mentality of Vritra (represents hostile behaviour towards Indra/the Priests or the living beings) and came to the side of Indra.

Rv-10.124,8 : *tā asya jyeṣṭhamindriyaṃ sacante tā īmā kṣetisvadhayā madantīḥ |*

tā im viśo na rājānaṃ vr̥ṇānābībhatsovo apa vr̥trādatiṣṭhan ||

These wait upon his loftiest power and vigour: he dwells in these who triumph in their Godhead;

And they, **like people who elect their ruler**, have in abhorrence turned away from Vritra.

This is the case of a kingdom whose king dies suddenly without naming his heir. Then the senior members of the Royal Family and Other Relatives decide to select the able successor out of several princes that the dead king has from his many wives. From the verse it is crystal clear that without considering an age of an individual (irrespective of the oldest or youngest), based on the desired qualities only, the members choose the best candidate for the post.

It means to say that, in those days, while selecting the successor, the king/royal people used to follow some norms so that the tribe would get the best leader from the available candidates.

Moral of the Story is- **“Always Select the Best among the Lot”**

VII. Family Matters- A Man having more than one Wife; Three Different References :

It is very interesting to know that the Rigvedic Poets have made a **family drama** as a subject of their compositions, and the same has been discussed in brief in the following paragraphs.

1. Quarrel among the Many Wives - Verse Rv-10.124,7:

In the second line of the verse **Rv-10.124,7**, here, the Poet has quoted example of regular quarrel among the women-folk or frequent fights among the many wives of a man, wherein each-one tries to impress upon others that she is the most-liked/favorite wife of her husband.

2. Rivalry between the Two Wives - Hymn Rv-10.145:

In the said hymn, the Poet tells us the story, how one wife of a man tries to become stronger and superior than other woman. In the Poet's words, she wants to drive away her rival wife/co-wife from her husband's house so that, she will get full attention from her husband, and hence become victorious. It means, one wife wants to dominate the other one.

3. Competition among the Many Wives - Hymn Rv-10.159:

This is another example of Jealousy among the many wives of a Man. As per the content of the hymn, a woman wants to defeat all other opponent wives or somehow wants to get rid of them, so that, only her children would have right to rule. It means, being the bold and dashing woman, she wants to dictate her terms to others and take control of her husband and family.

In short, when it comes to exhibit supremacy or status within the family, the women of that era were not far behind as that of men.

Moral of the Story is- **“Might is right”** or **“The Empty household Vessels make the most Noise”**.

VIII. General Remarks:

Other than highlighting regular **Yajna** ritual, and showering sky high praise on their favorite Deities, some Poets of **Mandala-10** have addressed a few common social issues that are different from their Religious Philosophy and are not considered by the Composers of the Nine Earlier Mandalas as the subject of their compositions. They are listed below.

1. Freedom to Select Life Partner for both Girls and Boys.
2. Opposition to have sexual relationship within the family members.
3. Performing wedding of an abandoned Girl in a proper way.
4. Acquiring a “Successor” for Kingdom through a “Secret Operation/Niyoga Relationship”.
5. Bringing back the “Married Life” on the correct path through a “Leading Action”.
6. Choosing the Best Candidate to Lead the Tribe.
7. “Real Problem of the Many Loud Mouths in a Family”- A man has more than one wife.

XI. Reference:

1. “**Rig Veda**”(Bilingual), Translated by **Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896)** in PDF
2. **Monier-Williams Dictionary**

“It is relatively easy to question someone's answer than answering his/her question.”